

**CITY OF COLUMBIA FALLS
CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
HELD JANUARY 03, 2022**

REGULAR MEETING – 7:00 P.M.

Mayor Barnhart called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Councilor Fisher, Councilor Karper (via Zoom), Councilor Lovering, Councilor Piper, Councilor Robinson, Councilor Shepard and Mayor Barnhart.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

OATHS OF OFFICE:

City Clerk Staalnd administered Oaths of Office to the following elected and appointed individuals:

Elected:

Mayor Barnhart, Councilpersons Lovering, Robinson and Shepard

Appointed:

City Attorney Justin Breck, City Judge Kristi Curtis and Detective Craig McConnell. Following the oaths, Detective Craig McConnell's detective badge was pinned by his wife, Shelly McConnell, in recognition of his promotion.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Councilor Lovering motioned to approve the Agenda, seconded by Councilor Robinson and the motion carried.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Councilor Lovering motioned to approve the Consent Agenda, noting the claims appeared to be in order, seconded by Councilor Shepard with Council voting as follows. Ayes: Shepard, Fisher, Karper, Lovering, Piper, Robinson and Barnhart.

Approval of Claims - January 3, 2022 - \$45,423.81

Approval of Payroll Claims - December 10, 2021 - \$86,363.27

Approval of Payroll Claims - December 23, 2021 - \$125,203.88

Approval of December 6, 2021 Regular City Council Meeting Minutes

Approve Funding, Construction, and Maintenance Agreement with MT DOT (TA 2599(1) and TA 2599(2) and authorize City Manager to execute

Approval of City Attorney Contact - 2022 and 2023 Calendar Years and authorize City Manager to execute

NEW BUSINESS:

Results of 2020 Fiscal Year Financial and Compliance Audit

City Manager Nicosia said the auditor held an exit conference with Finance Director Bates and herself on December 27th. The auditor went over the Independent Auditors' Report and the Report on Compliance and Internal Control. The City received an unmodified opinion which is the highest, best opinion an entity can receive. It means the auditor can express an opinion that the City's financial report is fairly stated as presented, no modifications to the report. Nicosia explained how the auditors are required to run samples on receipts, payroll transactions, utility billing, journal vouches and claims, noting that if the auditor finds

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discrepancies, the audit sample must be enlarged until the auditor is satisfied with the results. There are no findings or deficiencies in the City's Financial Statements and no non-compliance issues or internal control issues. The Council members were each given a copy of the audit report.

ORDINANCES / RESOLUTIONS:

Resolution # 1868 - A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Columbia Falls, Montana Amending the 2021-22 Fiscal Year Revenues and Appropriations Budget to Account for the EDA Project

City Manager Nicosia said this resolution is required because the City Council adopted the 22FY budget before the City officially had a contract with EDA, this Resolution allows the Finance Director to post Fund 2959-EDA Fund, a special revenue fund revenues and expenditures as well as amend Fund 2310 expenditures to reflect an operating transfer out instead of the budgeted capital outlay. Nicosia noted that the Engineers are at the 35% design phase. The City will call for bids after the project is completely designed and accepted by EDA.

Councilor Fisher made motion to approve Resolution # 1868, seconded by Councilor Shepard with Council voting as follows. Ayes: Fisher, Karper, Lovering, Piper, Robinson, Shepard and Barnhart.

Resolution # 1869 - A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Columbia Falls, Montana Establishing the City Business License Fees for the 2022 Calendar Year

City Manager Nicosia said this resolution is necessary pursuant to the updated Title 5 codified code which replaced the license fees with the reference that fees would be set by resolution. The recommended annual and seasonal/temporary license fees are the same as the prior years and have not been increased.

Councilor Piper motioned to approve Resolution # 1869, seconded by Councilor Lovering with Council voting as follows. Ayes: Karper, Lovering, Piper, Robinson, Shepard, Fisher and Barnhart.

REPORTS / BUSINESS FROM MAYOR & COUNCIL

Councilor Lovering said she noticed the sidewalks are not being cleared of snow; can we remind the business owners that this needs to be done? Nicosia said the City is reminding owners in addition we have notified the Department of Transportation to windrow along Hwy 2 and Nucleus and not packing hard snow on the sidewalk, making it impossible to clear the sidewalks.

Councilor Fisher said the City crews have been doing a good job on clearing snow from the streets.

Mayor Barnhart said people are still having a hard time crossing on Nucleus with the snow berms in the middle and over the crosswalks. Nicosia said the Department of Transportation was going to take care of that issue as well. Nicosia noted that the City council can look into purchasing equipment that can remove the snow from the sidewalks while setting the Urban Renewal District budget. Mayor Barnhart noted that Council had discussed that in the past.

CITY MANAGER REPORT:

Nicosia reported on the Leak Detection Report issued recently after Utility Services Associates, LLC completed the survey. Nicosia reported that the report pinpoints only 14 leaks, including service lines, valves, and hydrants. Nicosia noted that these were not the results the City was hoping for when we contracted for a complete system leak audit. Nicosia reminded Council that the City's ARPA Water Grant Application was not approved due to not receiving readiness points. The application had been based on the leak detection report

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finding 80-100 leaking service lines that would then be replaced with ARPA competitive grant funds and City funds. Nicosia reported that she and the public works director have been working on an updated ARPA grant application to submit January 14th for a new water project. Nicosia reported that MT DOC reached out on December 10th and said that the City can request engineering assistance, paid by the State, for the submission of the new Water System Grant, Cody Ferguson, MT DOC, indicated that the state had 10 engineering firms in the pool and they would select one to work on the City's application. Nicosia reported that the Kalispell office of Morrison-Maierle was selected so city staff is working with CR Leisinger on the application. Upon reviewing the leak detection report and the grant requirements, the City will submit an application to replace the long-leaking 2" galvanized water main and service lines on 5th Ave EN. Nicosia reported that the City will use the \$100,000 set aside for water from the direct allocation, Water Expansion Funds from Fund 5211 and ask for a 50% Competitive Grant to pay for the project. Nicosia said the Council will amend the Water Fund, 5210, and Water Capital Expansion Fund, 5211, budgets as allowed under state law, when the project is approved. Nicosia did not have final estimated numbers from the engineer but the Competitive Grant request will be less than \$200k. Council concurred with the recommended application and budget amendment. Councilman Shepard stated that he hopes this project is funded as that main and service lines have had issues for about 15 years and the neighborhood needs a fire hydrant.

Nicosia stated that she and Fire Chief Weeks would like to schedule a Public Safety Committee meeting to begin the discussion of the paid fireman transition. This meeting would include members from the fire department as well as the Rural Fire District Board. The meeting was set for January 24th at 6 pm. Nicosia also discussed the Fire Department Transition Training available through the IAFC, as discussed last year. Nicosia noted that it is less expensive to bring one of their trainer's onsite then sending a group to the training in Phoenix. Nicosia reported that Chief Weeks received a proposal from retired Chief Buckman to come and train for an entire day for the cost \$3,000, which includes training and travel costs. After discussion, it was decided to schedule the training for Wednesday, February 23rd.

Nicosia noted that the City finally has a signed agreement with the railroad. On March 2nd or 3rd we will have an onsite meeting for a diagnostic review with NRA, MT DOT, Railpros (RR engineers), KLJ (City's Engineers), Flathead County officials, City officials, and BNSF.

MISCELLANEOUS:

Police Department - November 2021 Activity
Correspondence

ADJOURN: Councilor Lovering motioned to adjourn at 8:00 p.m., seconded by Councilor Shepard.

Mayor

Attest:

City Clerk